



Town of Berwyn Heights

5700 Berwyn Road
Berwyn Heights, MD 20740
Tel. (301) 474-5000
Fax (301) 474-5002

MAYOR
Amanda M. Dewey

COUNCIL MEMBERS
Jodie A. Kulpa-Eddy (Mayor Pro Tem)
Christopher S. Brittan Powell
Jason W. Papanikolas
Ethan D. Sweep

Worksession Minutes April 19, 2021 | 7:00 pm

This meeting was held by videoconference due to the ongoing COVID-19 health emergency. The meeting was broadcast on Berwyn Heights cable TV channels and streamed on the Town website. Residents were given the opportunity to join the meeting via Zoom and comment by telephone and email.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Amanda Dewey, Mayor Pro Tempore (MPT) Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Councilmembers (CMs) Jason Papanikolas and Ethan Sweep. CM Christopher Brittan-Powell had an excused absence. Also present were Town Manager (TM) Laura Allen, Clerk Kerstin Harper and Thriving Earth Exchange Project Manager Imaris Rivera-Llavona.

1. Announcements

Mayor Dewey announced that a vaccination site at Greenbelt Metro Station has opened and has walk-in availability.

2. Approval of the Agenda

On a motion by MPT Kulpa-Eddy and second by CM Sweep, the agenda was approved 4 to 0.

3. Discussion Items

Thriving Earth Exchange update: Mayor Dewey welcomed Imaris Rivera, Project Manager for the tree canopy protection project to be undertaken by Thriving Earth Exchange and the Town. TM Allen said Ms. Rivera is a geoscientist who works for Puerto Rico-based EcoExploartorio, Inc. The project will be focused on making an inventory of invasive species to protect Berwyn Heights' tree canopy and providing resources on addressing invasive plant issues.

TM Allen and Ms. Rivera gave an overview of the project, with Ms. Rivera translating into Spanish. The Thriving Earth Exchange (TEX) is a program within the American Geophysicist Union (AGU) with the goal of advancing discovery in earth and space sciences for the benefit of humanity and the environment. TEX seeks to strengthen collaboration among scientists, partner organizations and communities to build healthy, resilient, just and economically responsible futures. In this case, TEX provides a volunteer scientist to help Berwyn Heights improve the health of its tree canopy by making an inventory and limiting the impact of invasive plants.

TM Allen and Ms. Rivera continued with a more detailed explanation of the scientist-community partnerships. Examples of TEX community partnerships in Maryland include a water quality project with the Town of Berlin, where TM Allen served as Town manager, an air quality project with Brandywine, a stormwater project with Takoma Park and a flooding project with Frederick. A

successful TEX project depends on availability of staff and volunteers, flexibility to adjust timelines, and a well-developed environmental ethic in the community.

The Berwyn Heights TEX project is expected to produce a property owners' toolkit for reducing invasive species. Beyond that, University of Maryland students have been approached about developing an app in the format of a game that awards points or badges for removing invasive species. Next steps include advertising for a volunteer scientist, an informational meeting with the Green Team, and finding project volunteers. The project is expected to start this summer or fall.

In discussion, the following points were made:

- Examples of invasive species include English Ivy and bamboo, i.e. plants which tend to spread quickly and crowd out native vegetation.
- The USDA and state agencies often provide lists of invasive plants for a particular region.
- The planned inventory of invasive plants will include invasive plant locations, to the extent feasible.
- Inventories should be conducted at different times of the year, as different species grow in different seasons.
- Project updates will be posted by Ms. Rivera on the TEX website. The most recent update is an advertisement for a volunteer scientist.

Mayor Dewey said she is looking forward to getting started on the project and thanked Ms. Rivera for participating in the presentation. CM Sweep said he is also looking forward to the project and volunteered to give advice and spread the word at work.

Greenbelt Road working group update: CM Sweep gave an update on the working group that coordinates priority setting between Berwyn Heights, Greenbelt and College Park for improvements to the Greenbelt Road commercial corridor anticipated with the redevelopment of Beltway Plaza mall. The working group held a meeting on April 8 and was attended by County Councilmember Todd Turner. The group has made good progress and will be ready with recommendations before the redevelopment begins.

CM Sweep said next steps include a presentation about the working group's findings at the April 22 Four Cities meeting, and a discussion with County Councilmember Dannielle Glaros at the next working group meeting. Other guests on the invitation list include Senator Doug Peters and Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) staff. CM Sweep asked if Councilmembers had concerns, they would like the working group to address.

In discussion, the following points were made:

- Building a coalition of State, County, and local business leaders in support of Greenbelt Road corridor improvements should be the priority at this point.
- Identifying funding sources and partners for redevelopment plans are also important.
- The cities participating in the working group may be asked to sign a letter expressing support for the working group.

Maglev DEIS comment letter: Mayor Dewey said that MPT Kulpa-Eddy has drafted a letter commenting on the Maglev Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which is based on Councilmembers' input from previous worksessions.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy explained that this version of the letter includes input from the Council as well as the Green Team, which discussed the letter at its last meeting. The revised letter sets forth a broader range of concerns as a municipality within Prince George's County in the first paragraph and omits references to it being a pilot project for a larger rail system to serve the east coast. Otherwise, comments are focused on those items an environmental impact statement must examine, e.g. impact of a proposed trainset maintenance facility on nearby wetlands, waterways and forested areas, and impacts specific to Berwyn Heights. The letter should be approved at the May Town meeting so it can be submitted by the end of the public comment period on May 25.

In discussion, the Council sought and received clarification about the location of the train maintenance facility, and whether Beaverdam Creek is the only waterway impacting Berwyn Heights. Councilmembers offered no additions or changes to the letter.

4. Department Reports

Mayor Dewey announced that Officer Frayer, who joined BHPD only 2 months ago, has accepted a leadership opportunity in another municipality and will leave Berwyn Heights. All people 16 years or older are now eligible to be vaccinated. The only vaccine approved for 16- and 17-year-olds is the Pfizer vaccine, which is available at the Bowie Senior Center site.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy reported that she attended a PGCMA meeting at which State Senator Melony Griffith spoke about recently passed state legislation. Also discussed were commercial devices for monitoring indoor pathogens, and new facilities for behavioral health care services and a maternal care pavilion at Doctor's Community Hospital. MPT Kulpa-Eddy noted that Mayor Dewey was nominated to serve on the PGCMA board of directors and asked about PGCMA participation credits for MML's Banner City certification. Mayor Dewey said she is tracking the credits and hopes certification can be obtained without the "If I were Mayor Contest," visit, as Berwyn Heights Elementary was unable to host a virtual visit this year.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy continued that Delegate Washington will host a virtual legislative recap on April 21; that Park & Planning has opened summer day camp registration, that the Community Center's STEAM summer camp will be discussed at the next BHEAC meeting, and that the BHHC is working on historical quizzes it plans to publish in the Bulletin. Upcoming Rec Council events include a Virtual Trivia Game evening and Berwyn Heights Day.

CM Papanikolas said that the Greenbelt Metro Station vaccination site does not allow bicycles to be taken inside. Anyone going there by bike should bring a lock.

CM Sweep announced that the Greenbelt Public Works yard will host its quarterly electronics, paint and styrofoam recycling event this Saturday and that the street sweeper will be in Town the week of May 3. Residents should take care in placing their trash cans at the curb on Thursday as high winds are expected.

5. Resident and Community Comments

MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked when Officer Frayer is leaving. TM Allen said his last day is April 26.

On a motion by CM Sweep and second by MPT Kulpa-Eddy, the meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*, Town Clerk